



Senator

Derek Kilmer

26th Legislative District

2007 Legislative Report



Senator
Derek Kilmer

26th Legislative District

Olympia Office

226 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40426
Olympia, WA 98504-0426
Phone: (360) 786-7650
Fax: (360) 786-1999

Web site

www.sdc.wa.gov/2007/kilmer.htm

Senate Committees

- Economic Development, Trade & Management, Vice Chair
- Higher Education, Vice Chair
- Consumer Protection & Housing
- Transportation

Let's stay in touch

One of the best ways to stay in touch as well as receive timely information about my legislative priorities is by e-memo. If you would like to receive it, please send me an e-mail at kilmer.derek@leg.wa.gov. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to represent you in Olympia.

March 2007

Dear Neighbors:

I am proud to represent you as the state senator from the 26th Legislative District, which extends from the Tacoma Narrows Bridge to Bremerton, including Gig Harbor, the Key Peninsula, Port Orchard, parts of Bremerton and points in between.

I've enjoyed the opportunity to meet many of you on your doorsteps, in Olympia, and at community events. With your input, I have a real understanding of our community's priorities.

We want:

- Good local jobs
- Strong schools
- A fair transportation deal, and
- Affordable, accessible health care.

These are my priorities when I roll up my sleeves every day to work for you. As you read this newsletter, I hope you will feel I'm focused on the right priorities. If you have concerns or suggestions, I welcome them. As your state senator, I am here to serve you.

Sincerely,

Derek Kilmer

Town Hall Meeting March 17
(See details on the back page)

My most important job? *Working for good jobs*

We need more local jobs to help people support their families and to avoid lengthy commutes. That's why, as your state senator, and as vice chairman of the Senate Economic Development, Trade & Management Committee, job creation is my top priority.

I've introduced bills to provide tax relief for small businesses, improve our permitting processes, enhance our work-force training efforts, provide support for start-up businesses, increase economic development activities by Washington's port districts, and make more infrastructure

financing available to cities and counties here in Washington. I've also continued advocating for state funding for the Kitsap Sustainable Energy and Economic Development Project in South Kitsap, a project that has the potential to provide jobs in the growing alternative energy arena.

Part of my effort to improve our opportunities for local jobs involves my push to boost higher education opportunities. With that in mind, I sponsored Senate Bill 5978, which requires an assessment of the higher education needs of the Kitsap



and Olympic peninsulas. This is a critical first step in ensuring we have the local capacity – through a new 4-year college or other method of increasing baccalaureate opportunities – to provide the education that is needed by students and employers – today and tomorrow.

Getting a fair transportation deal

We need a fair deal on the new Narrows Bridge

No one relies on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge more than you, the residents of the 26th District, and you shouldn't have to go broke crossing it. I have several proposals to reduce the cost of tolls:

- The first would cut the cost of the new bridge tolls in half for motorists who pay via electronic transponders during the first year.
- The second – Senate Bill 5681 – would keep bridge users from having to foot the bill for the sales tax on the construction of the bridge, shaving roughly \$40-60 million from the cost of the bridge for toll payers.
- The third – Senate Bill 5391 – would apply a portion of the revenue expected from fines paid by those caught illegally using electronic tolling lanes to the Narrows Bridge tolling account. Over time,

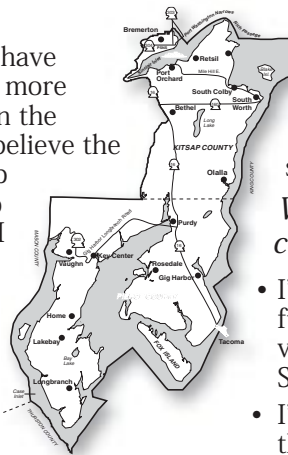
this bill could generate an additional \$15-20 million for the tolling account, reducing the amount of tolls needed.

We also need affordable fares on all ferries

Of course, bridge commuters aren't the only ones trying to get across or around Puget Sound. Ferry commuters make a comparable trek, and they deserve a break, too.

I want to lower costs for ferry commuters in two ways:

- Ferry commuters have seen fares rise by more than 60 percent in the past five years. I believe the state must step up its contribution to the ferry system. I sponsored Senate Bill 5680, which would double the amount of the state fuel tax distribution going to ferry operations, thereby reducing the corresponding fares paid by commuters.
- Last year the Legislature passed a law that would provide some start-up funding for passenger-only ferry operations. Senate Bill



5862 would provide additional support, directing some of the funding generated from the sales tax on fuel used by our ferries into an account that supports passenger-only ferries.

Working for safer, less congested roads

- I'm determined to make sure funding continues for building the vital Burley-Olalla interchange on State Route 16.
- I'm committed to following through with funds to design a new corridor on State Route 302.
- I'm following up on legislation passed last year to free up funds to improve roads at Gig Harbor North to enable the new St. Anthony's Hospital to be built.



Ensuring our kids can compete in a global economy



More than 230 years ago, Benjamin Franklin wrote, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." That's why, as we work on the budget this year, I will continue to push for smart investments in education – smaller class sizes, additional support for kids who are struggling and more enrollment slots in our two-year and four-year colleges.

As vice chairman of the Senate Higher Education Committee, I've also been working to open doors to our colleges for all Washingtonians. For example, I sponsored Senate Bill 5155, the Passport to College Promise Program which provides tuition assistance and support services to foster kids. National research tells us that only 2 percent of former foster kids ever get a four-year college degree. Twice that many end up in prison. Studies show that, with guidance during their teen years and with financial assistance and counseling during college, foster youth can succeed in college and in life.

Protecting taxpayers

We need more jobs – not more taxes. I believe it's important that government make budget decisions like our families; it needs to prioritize. This year, as we approach the budget process, I will continue to push our state to live within its means.

Where better than Washington to prepare for a rainy day?

I was proud to co-sponsor a measure that requires the state to establish a rainy day fund. Just as a family saves a portion of its income for a rainy day, the state should not spend all of its income during periods of economic growth.

Promoting the efficient use of your money

I've sponsored a bill to establish a new government efficiency hotline in the State Auditor's Office. Through this hotline, state employees and members of the public could report instances of government waste and identify opportunities for improved efficiency.

Protecting homeowners

There isn't a homeowner in our community who isn't aware of the property taxes they pay. Many residents live in fear of being taxed out of their homes. I've co-sponsored three bills focused on protecting homeowners:

- Senate Bill 5707 would limit increases in a home's assessed valuation to no more than 5 percent in a year, guaranteeing homeowners a predictable and more manageable tax rate.

- Senate Bill 5201 would increase the disposable income threshold to qualify for property tax relief for seniors and retirees due to disability.
- Senate Bill 5187 would exempt taxes on the first \$50,000 of valuation on property occupied as a principal residence.



Making health care affordable and accessible

Workers and their employers can benefit

I support efforts to enable private employers to purchase health insurance for themselves and their employees and families through the programs administered



through the state. By taking advantage of the state's purchasing power, Washington employers and their employees can realize substantial savings.

Insuring children who have no health coverage will benefit everyone

Our efforts to provide health coverage for all children in Washington continues to pick up steam with legislation this year to extend coverage to at least 32,000 currently unin-

sured children. This is important, in so many ways, but I'll list just two:

- Early treatment of common health problems not only saves money on treatment but lets people live healthier, more rewarding lives.
- The cost of medical care for the uninsured is passed on to private payers, raising the rates paid by everyone else with health insurance. This kind of care is the most expensive because uninsured patients rely on costly emergency rooms instead of primary care and prevention.

Seniors need help with co-pays

To help out seniors on limited incomes, for whom prescription drug co-payments under Medicare Part D pose a financial hardship, I co-sponsored Senate Bill 5091.

Supporting those who sacrifice for all of us

No one makes more sacrifices on our behalf than the members of our armed services, but they need our support as well. I have proposed two bills to help veteran-owned businesses:

- Senate Bill 5253 would empower the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to identify veteran-owned businesses and help citizens support them. The bill would establish a list of veteran-owned business that would be available on the DVA Web site. In addition, a decal would be created that a veteran-owned business could display to identify itself in the community.
- Senate Bill 5289 would require state agencies to perform outreach to veteran-owned businesses to increase opportunities for veterans to provide goods and services to the state. Agencies would be encouraged to award 3 percent of goods and services contracts to veteran-owned businesses.

I sponsored these bills after speaking to local veterans who have had trouble maintaining their business – or starting new businesses – after returning home from the Middle East. I believe that if these men and women are willing to serve our country in uniform, this is the least

we can do to try to give something back to them.

Beyond that, I've co-sponsored a number of bills to help veterans and their families:

- Senate Bill 5123 would extend the state's non-discrimination protections to cover all veterans and active or reserve service personnel.
- Senate Bill 5430 would allow state employees to donate sick leave to co-workers who are called into military service.
- Senate Bill 5256 would exclude veterans benefits when calculating property tax relief for retirees.
- Senate Bill 5040 would provide scholarships for surviving spouses and dependants of



military members who lose their lives or become totally disabled while serving on active duty.

- Senate Bill 5280 would establish a Dollars for Military Scholars program to provide education grants for active or retired military members, as well as their spouses and dependents.

I want to hear from you

Please join me, Rep. Pat Lantz and Rep. Larry Seaquist to discuss the pressing issues of the 2007 legislative session at one of these Town Hall meetings on Saturday, March 17:

- **Key Peninsula meeting:** 9 to 10:30 a.m. at the Vaughn Civic Center
- **Gig Harbor meeting:** 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Gig Harbor Civic Center
- **Port Orchard meeting:** 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the Givens Community Center
- **Bremerton meeting:** 4 to 5:30 p.m. at the Norm Dicks Center

Senator Derek Kilmer
26th Legislative District
226 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40426
Olympia, WA 98504-0426



PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Olympia, WA
Permit #133